I thought the ſoyle would haue made me rich:
But nowe I wote, it is nothing ſich.
For eyther the ſhepheards bene pole and ſtill,
And ledde of theyr ſheepe, what way they wyll:
Or they bene falſe, and full of couetiſe,
And caſten to compaſſe many wrong empriſe.
But the more bene fraight with fraud and ſpight,
Ne in good nor goodnes taken delight:
But kindle coales of conteck and yre,
Wherewith they ſette all the world on fire:
Which when they thinken agayne to quench
With holy water, they doen hem all drench.
They ſaye they con to heauen the high way,
But by my ſoule I dare vnderſaye,
They neuer ſette foote in that ſame troade,
But balk the right way, and ſtrayen abroad.
They boaſt they han the deuill at commaund:
But alke hem therefore, what they han paund.
Marrie that great *Pan* bought with deare borrow,
To quite it from the blacke bowre of ſorrowe.
But they han ſold thilk ſame long agoe:
For thy woulden drawe with hem many moe.
But let hem gange alone a Gods name:
As they han brewed, ſo let hem beare blame.

Hobbinoll.

Diggon, I praye thee ſpeake not ſo dirke.
Such myſter ſaying me ſeemeth to mirke.

Diggon.

Then playnely to ſpeake of ſhepheards moſt what,
Badde is the beſt (this engliſh is flatt.)
Their ill hauiour garres men miſſay,
Both of their doctrine, and of their faye.
They ſayne the world is much war then it wont,
All for her ſhepheards bene beaſtly and blont.
Other ſayne, but how truely I note,
All for they holden ſhame of theyr cote.
Some ſticke not to ſay, (whote cole on her tongue)

That

That like miſchiefe graſeth hem e
All for they caſten too much of wo
To deck her Dame, and enrich h
For ſuch encheaſon, If you goe ny
Fewe chymneis reeking you ſhall
The fatte Oxe, that wont ligge in
Is nowe faſt ſtalled in her crumen
Thus chatten the people in theyr
Ylike as a Monſter of many head
But they that ſhooten neereſt the
Sayne, other the fat from their bea
For bigge Bulles *of Baſan* brace
That with theyr hornes butten the
But the leane ſoules treaden vnde
And to ſeeke redreſſe mought little
For liker bene they to pluck away
Then ought of the gotten good to
For they bene like foule wagmoir
That if thy galage once sticketh fa
The more to wind it out thou doeſt
Thou mought ay deeper and deep
Yet better leaue of with a little lo
Then by much wreſtling to leeſe t

Hobbinoll.

Nowe Diggon, I ſee thou ſpeake
Better it were, a little to feyne,
And cleanly couer, that cannot be c
Such il, as is forced, mought nedes
But of like paſtoures howe done th

Diggon.

Like as the ſhepheards, ſike bene
For they will liſten to the ſhephear
But if he call hem at theyr good ch
They wander at wil, and ſtrap at p
And to theyr foldes yeeld at their o
But they had be better come at the
For many han into miſchiefe fall,

EDMUND SPENSER *The Shepheardes Calender* LONDON, 1579 THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY